

Message Text

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PAGE 01 COLOMB 03663 111203Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
/064 W

-----043301 121458Z /64

R 111130Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY COLOMBO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1097
INFO AMEMBASSY DACCA
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU
AMEMBASSY KABUL
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
AMCONSUL MADRAS

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PGOV, CE
SUBJECT: SECOND READING OF NEW CONSTITUTION PASSED

1. THE SECOND READING DEBATE ON THE NEW CONSTITUTION
EDNED IN THE NATIONAL STATE ASSEMBLY (NSA) ON AUGUST 9 WITH A
137-7 VOTE FAVORING THE NEW CONSTITUTION BILL AS AMENDED.
THE SRI LANKA FREEDOM PARTY VOTED AGAINST THE BILL;
THE TAMIL UNITED LIBERATION FRONT ABSTAINED. THE LONE
CEYLON WORKERS CONGRESS REPRESENTATIVE VOTED WITH
THE GOVERNMENT.

2. PRINCIPAL RESULT OF NSA DEBATE THUS FAR WAS THE
GOVERNMENT'S WITHDRAWAL OF ARTICLE 157, WHICH DREW MUCH
CRITICISM AS A STIFLING OF POLITICAL EXPRESSION. ARTICLE
157 WOULD HAVE PROVIDED FOR UP TO 10 YEARS IMPRISONMENT
AND A FINE FOR ANYONE WHO ADVOCATED OR ENGAGED IN ANY
CONSPIRACY TO CHANGE OR REPEAL THE CONSTITUTION.

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BILL IS NOW IN COMMITTEE WHERE THERE MAY BE FURTHER
AMENDMENTS AND MODIFICATIONS OF LANGUAGE, BEFORE
THE FINAL VOTING ON THE THIRD READING AUGUST 16.

3. COMMENT: THERE ARE LIKELY TO BE FEW MAJOR
CHANGES, ALTHOUGH THE PRIME MINISTER AND PRESIDENT
ARE HEAVILY ENGAGED IN LAST MINUTE NEGOTIATIONS

ON DETAILS, SOME OF WHICH ARE SEEN TO HAVE IMPORTANT
IMPLICATIONS BY THE LEGALLY SOPHISTICATED ELITE.
WE HAVE BEEN TOLD THAT THE NEW CONSTITUTION PROCLAIMING
THE DEMOCATIC SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF SRI LANKA WILL
BE PROMULGATED ON SEPTEMBER 14. THAT DATE REPORTEDLY
WAS CHOSEN ON THE BASIS OF ASTROLOGICAL PREDICTIONS
OF THE MOST PROPITIOUS TIME CLOSEST TO THE PRESIDENT'S
BIRTHDAY, SEPTEMBER 17.
WRIGGINS

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NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
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Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: AGREEMENT DRAFT, CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 11 aug 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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Executive Order: N/A
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Expiration:
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Litigation History:
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Original Previous Classification: n/a
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Status: NATIVE
Subject: SECOND READING OF NEW CONSTITUTION PASSED
TAGS: PGOV, CE
To: STATE
Type: TE
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